



PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN MULTI-CULTURAL FOCUS GROUP REPORT February 2003

This report contains an Executive Summary, a detailed summary of the focus group discussion, and the results of the questionnaire.

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Introduction

The diverse perspectives of all community members are valued in the development of a parks, recreation, and open space plan for the next 20 years. In an effort to gather input from individuals from Eugene's diverse cultural groups, a Multi-cultural Focus Group was held on February 12, 2003, to obtain input for the update of Eugene's PROS Comprehensive Plan. Three participants attended. Three additional individuals later submitted written comments.

Additional outreach efforts were conducted to expand on the findings of this report. These additional efforts are summarized in separate reports, including a Communities of Color Workshop and Speaker's Bureau presentations to groups representing Eugene's diverse community.

B. Participants

Carla Gray, *University of Oregon*

Renee Grube, *City of Eugene LRCS*

Mark Harris, *Lane Community College*

Marcy Middleton, *Eugene Human Rights Commission*

Andrea Riner, *City of Eugene POS*

Lisa Garbett, *MIG, Inc., Consultants*

Sally McIntyre, *MIG, Inc., Consultants*

C. Overview

Sally McIntyre from Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc. (MIG) facilitated an informal discussion. Participants offered their input on a variety of topics, including improving existing parks, recreation and open space opportunities for individuals from diverse cultures; the desired mix of natural area parks vs. active parks for Eugene; a vision for a community center targeted toward people from diverse cultures; and how to encourage people from diverse cultures to increase their participation in parks and recreation opportunities in the City.

D. Key Findings

The following key findings emerged from the workshop:

- **Recreation programs** could be more attractive to Eugene's diverse community if:
 - Programs were more economically accessible;
 - Diversity was highlighted in the Program Guide; and
 - Culturally appropriate instructors were hired for classes addressing cultural traditions, e.g., a class in Native American arts should be taught by a Native American.



- **Parks, natural areas and recreation facilities** could better meet the needs of Eugene's diverse population by:
 - Interpreting diverse cultures in parks, natural areas and facilities;
 - Developing a community center targeted toward people of diverse cultures;
 - Providing appropriate spaces for large group picnics and events;
 - Incorporating natural areas into active parks and neighborhoods; and
 - Working to reduce racism and increase acceptance in our community.
- Participants suggested that the City increase **participation by people from diverse cultures** in parks, open space and recreation services by providing more relevant recreation opportunities and creating a more welcoming atmosphere:
 - Increase collaboration with people from diverse cultures in planning, designing and implementing recreation opportunities;
 - Increase outreach as well as cultural relevance of public information; and
 - Hire diverse staff.

The following is a summary of additional written comments:

- The **primary needs** of the cultural groups represented include human rights, education, employment opportunities, and health care.
- The **primary needs of the youth** from the groups represented include a sense of belonging, education, and religious and cultural identity.
- The City could provide the following types of **parks, recreation and open space elements or programs** to meet the needs of the diverse groups:
 - Cultural events;
 - Anti-racism education; and
 - Social and professional skill building for youth.
- The following **benefits** of parks, recreation and open space service are most important:
 - Celebrate and raise awareness of diverse cultural traditions;
 - Enhance community image and sense of place;
 - Connect people together, building stronger families and neighborhoods; and
 - Improve health and wellness.
- When asked to identify the **highest priority improvements** in parks, recreation and open space improvements, participants mentioned **training in understanding racism** and **hiring more people of color**.

II. DISCUSSION

A detailed summary of the workshop discussion follows.

A. Recreation Program Improvements

The participants suggested the following ideas for improving recreation programs to better serve individuals from diverse cultures:

- Make programs financially accessible for diverse economic groups
- Provide services for adults
- Increase diversity in Recreation Program Guide; it currently reflects the white culture



- Create programs for youth that highlight traditions of diverse cultures, such as teaching science through Native American cooking techniques
- Reach out to people of diverse cultures to teach classes and provide programs; e.g., a Navajo weaving class should be taught by a person who is Navajo

B. Park and Natural Area Improvements

The participants suggested the following ideas for improving existing parks and natural areas:

- Look for opportunities to interpret diverse cultures in existing parks
- Allow camping/lodging at Spencer Butte Park for special events
- Sponsor large gatherings in parks
- Provide outdoor games, such as outdoor chess and checkers
- Work with City law enforcement agencies to enforce ordinances on noise and alcohol/drug use evenly and fairly
- Work with the Eugene community to encourage acceptance of people from diverse cultures who meet and gather in public places.
- Provide space for cultural celebrations, such as large group picnic areas
- Develop a community center that is targeted toward people of diverse cultures, similar to the Hilyard Center's focus on services for people with disabilities
- Interpret community history related to diverse cultures as well as mainstream history in programs, parks and facilities:
 - Organize City-sponsored celebrations or days to honor heroes from different cultures
 - Reflect on the Alton Baker "Tent City"
 - Incorporate cultural symbols in park and community facility design, such as the four elements of earth, wind, fire and water
- Provide cultural interpretation of natural areas, such as interpretation of Native American history

C. Mix of Natural vs. Active Parks

Participants discussed their level of satisfaction with the current mix of natural parks vs. active parks. Generally, the group preferred a mix of parks that include slightly more active than natural parks. Providing small natural features within active parks also was mentioned as important. Other comments included:

- Los Angeles is a good example of providing small natural areas in active parks and within neighborhoods
- Family gathering places are needed, such as large group picnic areas for barbeques and enjoying the outdoors together
- Large natural areas are sometimes viewed by individuals from diverse cultures as places that are unsafe, or as areas where they are likely to experience harassment or even physical assault

D. Community Center

Participants thought that a community center targeted toward people from diverse cultures could provide a forum for learning about cultural traditions and celebrating diverse cultures. It could provide a safe gathering place for people of all ages and cultures. Participants identified a number of features that would be included in their vision of this community center:

- Multi-purpose/multi-use
 - Meeting room
 - Eating room
 - Kitchen
 - Basketball/volleyball court



- Garden (especially for elders)
- Multi-generational
- Social
- Spiritual
- Non-linear (with a round or oval gathering space rather than one that is angular)
- Indoor and outdoor
- A place where everyone is engaged
- A community facility and gathering place
- A place to celebrate family
- A place where a person can feel safe experiencing the outdoors
- A place where rites of passage are celebrated
- A place for cultural interpretation as well as cultural celebrations

E. Participation

The City of Eugene could encourage participation by people from diverse cultures in parks, open space, and recreation services by providing relevant recreation opportunities and creating a more welcoming atmosphere:

- Increase and continue collaboration with people from diverse cultures in planning, designing and implementing recreation opportunities
- Increase outreach targeted to people from diverse cultures
- Provide a multi-cultural focus in neighborhood association newsletters
- Expand the use of community volunteers from diverse cultures
- Hire staff that represents the cultural diversity of Eugene

III. QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

A detailed summary of the questionnaire responses follows. The numbers in parentheses indicate how many people mentioned a particular statement.

1) Which ethnic group are you representing at today's focus group?

- Black (2)
- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Muslim/Arab

2a) In your opinion, what are the primary needs of the ethnic group you represent?

- Human rights (6)
 - Stop racism
 - Stop deportations
 - Stop illegal imprisonment
 - Reform the justice system
 - Be treated as an equal
 - Be seen and heard
- Education
- Health care
- Employment
- Home ownership
- Survival



2b) What are the primary needs of the youth from the ethnic group you represent?

- Inclusiveness (2)
 - To feel they are part of the community
 - To be represented in books, history, pictures, exhibits
- Education (2)
 - Mentorship
 - Equal treatment in school
- Justice reform
- Religion and cultural identity
 - Youth have abandoned religion and ethnic culture for fear of persecution by media, government, and people

3) What types of parks, recreation and open space elements or programs could the City of Eugene provide to meet the needs of the ethnic group you represent?

a) For the general population:

- Ethnic cultural events
- Internet access
- Additions to “Skinner” statue, even if in picture form
- Anti-racism education
 - People advertise their anti-Arab, anti-Muslim racism. This is wrong. It should stop

b) For youth specifically:

- Social and professional skill-building
- Anti-racism education

4) Which of the following benefits of parks, recreation and open space service are most important to the ethnic group you represent? (Please check your top two choices.)

- Provide opportunities to celebrate and raise awareness of diverse cultural traditions (2)
- Enhance community image and sense of place (2)
- Connect people together, building stronger families and neighborhoods (2)
- Improve health and wellness (2)
 - Depression is rampant

5) What outreach strategies should the City use to inform and educate your ethnic group about the programs, facilities and services available to them?

- Outreach to churches
- Bi-lingual formats
- You can’t reach people. They are scared and depressed. They are leaving

6) What opportunities could the City offer to celebrate and raise awareness of diverse cultural traditions?

- Dedicated multi-cultural community center
- Stop the genocide against Muslims. Scream about it, if you care



7) Of all the improvements discussed, what three parks, recreation and open space improvements are most needed in Eugene today? (Please list your choices. They do not have to be in priority order.)

- Provide training in understanding racism
- Hire more people of color
- Make cultural competence part of personnel/evaluation
- Bethel
- Whitaker
- Skinner Butte Park

8) Additional comments?

- Know how the money is spent/divided
- My Muslim/Arab community believes that it is excluded and segregated from normal human treatment by both government and people
- Education does not help people without civil rights and without dignity

Prepared by MIG, Inc., Eugene, Oregon

